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Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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**Yugoslavia: Prospects for Military
Intervention Growing**

Summary

The forces favoring intervention by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) to preserve the federation have never been greater. Last week's confrontation in Croatia underscores our judgment that communal conflict between the Croatian government and its ethnic Serb minority would be the most likely catalyst for federal military intervention. Slovenia's and Croatia's threat to secede if they fail in their quest to turn Yugoslavia into a loose confederation could also generate widespread pressure on federal military forces to intervene. At least some key military leaders appear increasingly willing to intervene if the Presidency orders them to do so. While the military has the capability to take over the northern republics, Yugoslav leaders realize that such actions could quickly fracture the JNA along ethnic lines and lead to civil war. Military intervention in the northern republics would set back US efforts to see democracy spread in Yugoslavia and would portend greater instability in the Balkans. Human rights abuses would increase as the more authoritarian Serbs took the lead in

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running Yugoslavia. Balkan stability would suffer, as a weakened Yugoslavia would present a tempting target for possible irredentist claims from neighboring countries.

DISCUSSION

Grounds for Intervention Growing

The growing possibility of ethnic violence between Serbs and Croats, and Slovenia's and Croatia's push to turn the Yugoslav federation into a loose confederation of sovereign states are increasing the prospect of military intervention to hold the country together. Both northern republics have threatened to secede from Yugoslavia if agreement is not reached on an acceptable confederation.

Ethnic Flashpoints. Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's efforts to create a sovereign state have sharply increased tensions between Croatia's Serbian minority--about 12 percent of the population--and the Croatian majority. Civil conflict was narrowly averted last weekend when armed Serbs took control of several towns in the Serb-populated Knin region of Croatia in order to hold a referendum on autonomy. Earlier, the republic's Serbs had issued their own "declaration of autonomy" in reaction to changes to Croatia's constitution that emphasize Croatian cultural rights. The Serbs want to appoint their own police chiefs and are refusing to honor the new Croatian flag. In addition, Serbs throughout Yugoslavia are promising to join the fray if violence results.

Tudjman is countering that an autonomous region for Serbs within Croatia is unacceptable and has charged Serbia with fomenting unrest to undermine his government. Although he allowed the referendum to be held, his nationalist government is monitoring closely how the minority tries to articulate its "autonomy." Tudjman is convinced that Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic and his supporters are using the referendum to destabilize his government and provoke federal military intervention in Croatia. Tudjman is likely to come under intense pressure to regain the Serb-controlled town; a move that would probably be met by armed resistance.

Pushing for Confederation. Since the non-Communist DEMOS coalition won Slovenia's--and Yugoslavia's--first post-World War II free election last April, the new government's program to establish Slovene sovereignty has led to a series of confrontations with Belgrade. The most serious conflicts have arisen over last month's

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"declaration of sovereignty" that calls for a separate republic army. The DEMOS government already has declared it will meet only half of its quota of federal military conscripts in September and that they will solely serve in Slovenia and Croatia. The decision puts Slovenia on a collision course with Belgrade, and the federal ministry of defense has warned that "appropriate measures" will be taken to ensure adherence to the draft laws. The Slovenes also are reviewing republic federal laws. They assert that in cases of conflict the republic laws will prevail.

Tudjman has cautiously followed the Slovene lead, but last weekend's events may accelerate his timetable for Croatian sovereignty. The Croatian government has noted Belgrade's passivity during the crisis in Knin and may shift to more radical independence-oriented policies.

Tudjman, who was jailed for his efforts to increase Croatia's autonomy in 1972 and 1981, wants to establish a sovereign Croatian state that would control its own military, according to press interviews. The Croats recently amended their republic constitution to emphasize political and economic sovereignty.

Military Prepared to React

Civil conflict in Croatia would be the most likely trigger for federal military intervention. A military spokesman has stated that the JNA has the responsibility to prevent fratricidal war in any part of Yugoslavia and would carry out this task unconditionally. If Tudjman suppresses ethnic Serbian leaders or dispatches Croatian forces into Serb-controlled areas, he could easily spark rioting or organized resistance. Spiraling ethnic conflict in the republic might force the JNA to act to limit violence before the collective Presidency could come to a decision. Once in place, the military would be under pressure, especially from Serbia, to remove Tudjman from power.

In our view, Slovenia's refusal to comply with draft laws could also be a catalyst for intervention.

Although a compromise is under discussion, the sides are far apart, and Belgrade probably will opt for legal sanctions, such as arresting individuals who fail to report for service and forcing

* Despite denials by Belgrade that the JNA played a role in the recent disturbances in Knin, a pro-Serb bias was evident in many of its actions. Yugoslav air force MiGs intercepted and turned back Croatian police helicopters headed for the Serb-controlled region of Croatia. JNA Chief of Staff Adzic warned Croatian leaders the Army would intervene if one person was killed in Croatia.

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Slovenes to serve outside Croatia and Slovenia. Even these measures, however, might lead Slovenia to precipitately form an army or secede.

If the Presidency fails to act, military leaders might be tempted to move without its approval to head off separatist forces before they gain greater momentum. Military leaders might believe intervening now in Slovenia and perhaps Croatia would be less costly than having to deal with the violent breakup of the country.

The JNA has the assets in place to seize of power from civilian authorities in the two northern republics of Slovenia and Croatia. Military units in the two northern republics are under control of the 5th Army headquartered in Zagreb. In Slovenia, there are four infantry brigades, two tank brigades, and one artillery regiment. In Croatia, there are two infantry brigades and five infantry regiments, three tank brigades and two tank regiments, and two artillery regiments. The three tank brigades in Croatia are reportedly among the largest and best equipped in the JNA and are maintained at 65-percent strength. The 5th Army headquarters has direct control over two helicopter squadrons, two SA-6 regiments, and various anti-aircraft, engineer, and signal regiments.

There would be little warning of intervention because these units would simply move out of garrison. Few, if any units, would have to be moved from one republic to another. In our view, swift deployment of units to strategic locations probably would result in quick capitulation of the two republics.

JNA Intervention Carries High Risks

Intervention in the northern republics probably would cause the military to splinter along ethnic lines. In our view, the introduction of the multiethnic JNA into Serb areas of Croatia would alienate Croat officers and soldiers and cause many to disobey orders and desert. Slovene soldiers would also be tempted to leave the service, realizing Army intervention in Croatia would set a precedent for their republic. If Croat and Slovene deserters from federal units joined with local Territorial Defense Units (TDF) units to form republic guerilla organizations, they could form a strong opposition to federal forces. An occupation in Croatia or Slovenia would be likely to prompt a widespread terrorist campaign against federal targets.

Implications of Intervention for the United States

Military intervention in the northern republics would have a detrimental impact on US and European interests in the region. Ethnic violence would likely be widespread, particularly in Croatia

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and Bosnia, where Serb and Croat tensions are most acute. The inevitable accusations of human rights violations would move European Community members to delay any plans to facilitate Yugoslav membership into the EC and handicap Yugoslav efforts within the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Accusations of human rights violations would also deprive Yugoslavia of some of its special status it derives from its participation in the non-aligned movement. The West could feel compelled to apply economic sanctions against a country that has attempted to move into the European mainstream since World War II. [REDACTED]

Military intervention could also have serious repercussions for the region. Italy, Austria, and Hungary probably would have to cope with a flood of refugees. The Kosovo Albanians might use the intervention as a signal to rise up against Serb persecution and seek to align themselves with Tirana, especially if Albanian President Alia's reforms appear to be liberalizing Albania. Although unlikely, Budapest might be tempted to take advantage of Yugoslavia's weakened state to make a grab for the Hungarian parts of Vojvodina. Likewise, Sofia might try to reassert its historical claims to Macedonia. [REDACTED]

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APPENDIX A

The JNA--Guarantor of Yugoslav Unity

Since the demise of the Yugoslav Communist party earlier this year, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) has been the only significant integrative force in the federation. The JNA is a unified, ethnically-integrated military service composed of ground, air, and naval forces with a current strength of approximately 180,000 men. The JNA officer corp is predominantly Serb, but non-Serbs constitute approximately 40 percent of the officer corps, [REDACTED] In the enlisted ranks, [REDACTED] Serbs compose 31 percent of all draftees. [REDACTED]

The Territorial Defense Force (TDF) is a 1-million-citizen reserve force at the republic level that could be transformed into republic armies. The TDF was designed to fight a protracted guerilla war against foreign invaders and has large quantities of light weapons stored throughout the country. In exercises, the Yugoslavs have proved capable of mobilizing local TDF units within 24 hours, [REDACTED]

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APPENDIX B

Deciding on Military Intervention

The Yugoslav collective Presidency, with its constitutional role as commander in chief of the military, presides over the rapidly crumbling Titoist political system. Belgrade lacks leverage--except the threat of military intervention--to force the Slovenes and Croats to moderate their drive toward confederation or secession. How it responds in the next few months could determine whether Yugoslavia makes a peaceful transition to a new constitutional order that includes multiparty democracy, or drifts into civil war.

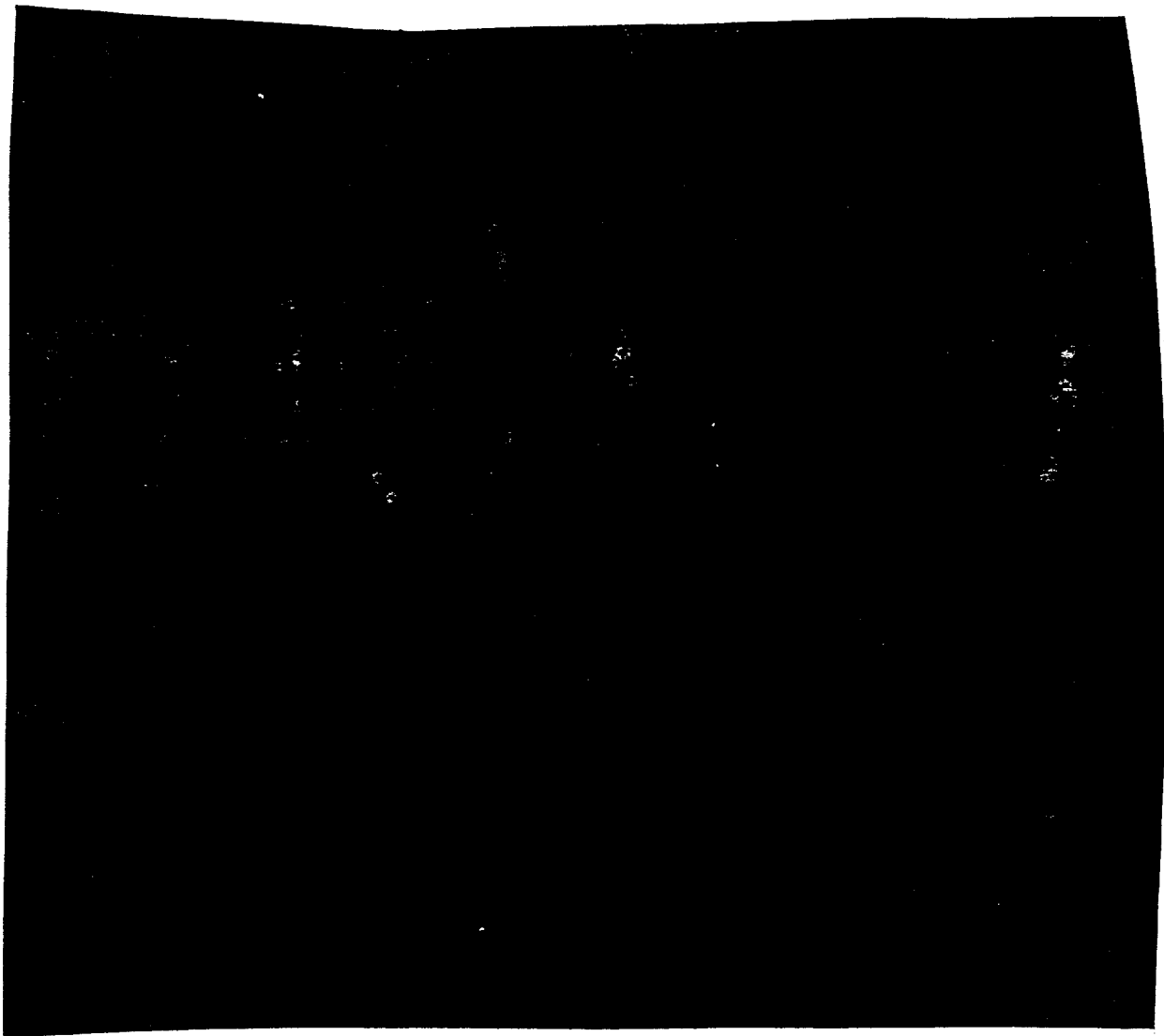
We believe the eight-man Presidency views military intervention as a last resort but probably could marshal the majority of votes needed to order intervention to prevent the violent breakup of the country or contain major ethnic violence in Croatia. The dire implications of intervention--possible civil war and the fracturing of the Army along ethnic lines, economic disruptions, and the international condemnation of Yugoslavia--suggests that failing to act would have to be catastrophic to influence swing votes like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, to favor use of the military.

- Bosnia-Herzegovina might join a Serbian-led coalition in the Presidency if it appeared Croatia's secession would lead Serbia or Croatia to take over parts of Bosnia. Violence between Bosnia-Herzegovina's three major ethnic groups--Muslims, Serbs, and Croats--or the prospect of unrest spreading from Croatia also might lead Bosnians to support military intervention.
- Macedonia might agree to intervention to safeguard its long-term interest in keeping Slovenia and Croatia in Yugoslavia to counterbalance the Serbs. The Macedonians feel pressed from the north by aggressive Serb nationalism, from the south and east by Greece and Bulgaria, and from inside by an increasingly restless ethnic-Albanian population. The departure of the northern republics from the federation would further isolate Macedonia and expose the republic to the machinations of its nationalistic neighbors.

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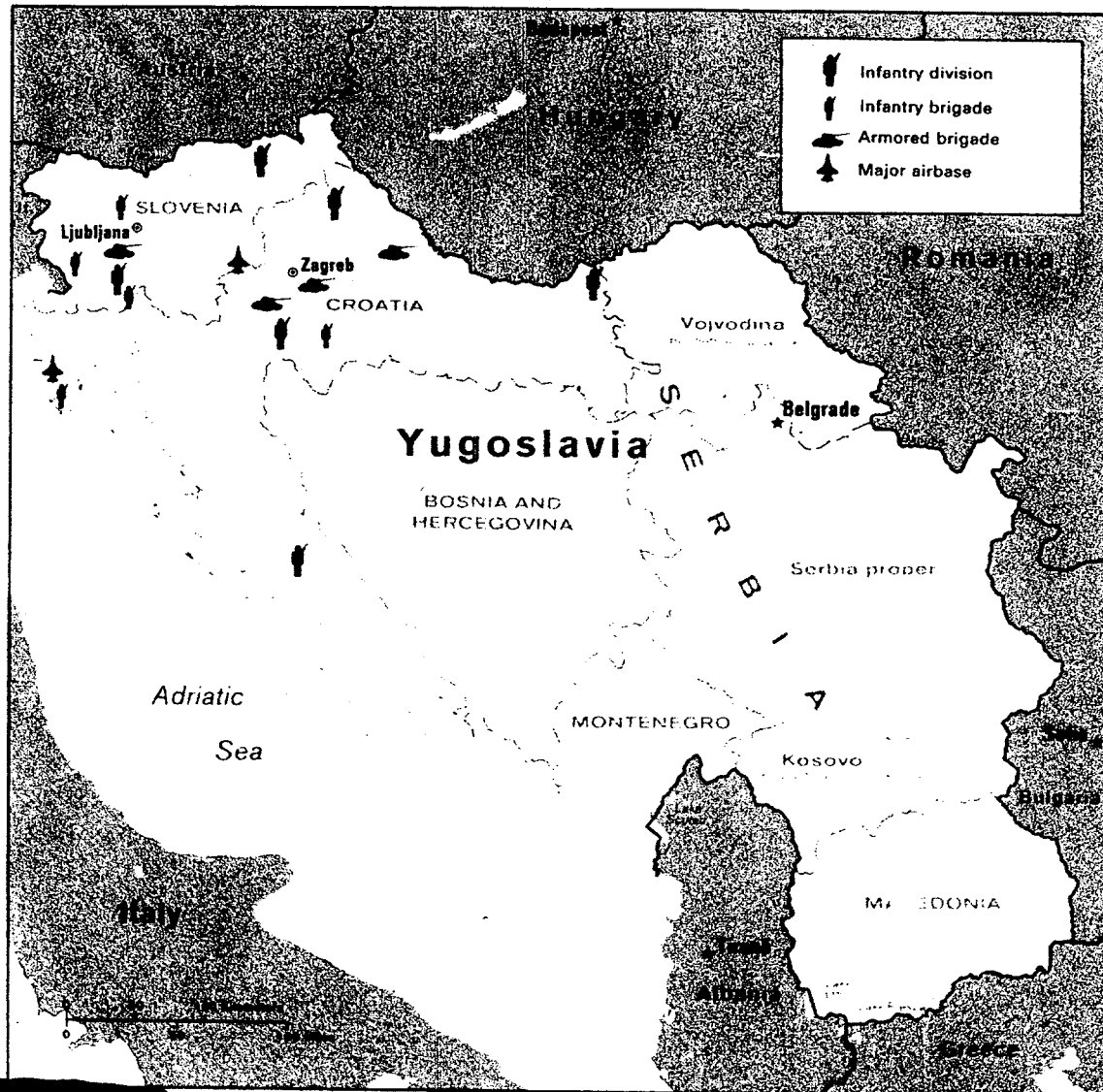
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APPENDIX C



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Ground and Air Force Units in Slovenia and Croatia



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